

a proposal for citizen review

new

improvement

plan for  
recreation &  
open space

THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN OF SAN FRANCISCO

PREPARED BY THE SAN FRANCISCO DEPARTMENT OF CITY PLANNING



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## DEPARTMENT OF CITY PLANNING

100 LARKIN STREET · SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA 94102

October 12, 1972

We are pleased to forward to you the Improvement Plan for Recreation and Open Space, A Proposal For Citizen Review. This is the fourth in a series of proposed revisions to the City's Comprehensive Plan.

The Department of City Planning has prepared this plan in consultation with the Recreation and Park Department. The plan proposes a series of objectives and policies for recreation and open space in San Francisco. Detailed implementation programs are also included.

Public hearings before the City Planning Commission and the Recreation and Park Commission will be held to hear citizen reaction to the plan. These hearings will be November 16, 1972, at 3:00 p.m. and December 12, 1972, at 7:30 p.m. at locations to be announced.

The plan will be revised on the basis of comments received at these hearings. We hope that you will help us in our goal of eliciting broad response and comment in planning for San Francisco's recreation and open space needs.

The Department staff will be available to discuss the plan or changes to the plan. If there are any questions, please contact Emily Hill (558-4541).



October 12, 1977

The following is a summary of the information received from the Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management, regarding the proposed action to establish a new National Monument in the State of California.

The Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management, has received a request from the State of California to establish a new National Monument in the State of California. The request is for the establishment of a new National Monument in the State of California, which would be known as the "State of California National Monument".

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## DEPARTMENT OF CITY PLANNING

100 LARKIN STREET · SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA 94102

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September, 1972

TO THE HONORABLE MEMBERS OF THE CITY PLANNING COMMISSION:

I am pleased to submit to you the "Improvement Plan for Recreation and Open Space", proposed as the fourth new element in the Comprehensive Plan of San Francisco, following residence, urban design, and transportation. The plan was prepared by the staff of the Department of City Planning in consultation with the Recreation and Park Department and citizens groups throughout the city.

Recreation and open space are not new issues in San Francisco. Slightly over one hundred years ago, in 1865, the planner of Golden Gate Park, Frederick Law Olmsted, observed that the only open space available for picnicking in San Francisco was "a burial ground on a high elevation, scourged by the wind, laid out only with regard to the convenience of funerals, with no trees or turf, ...". From the observation of the famous landscape architect who also designed Central Park in New York City, and from the concern of many San Franciscans, Golden Gate Park was conceived and born. Olmsted not only prepared a plan that encompassed San Francisco's largest park, but also proposed a comprehensive system of parks for the city.

Today, our situation has become more complex than it was in Olmsted's time. Little undeveloped space remains in the city, and indeed is fast disappearing in the Bay Area. Opportunities for recreation must be shared by many more San Franciscans than was the case a century ago. That planning is now required to preserve remaining open space and to enhance the opportunity for recreation for the city as a whole is a commentary on the growth of that complexity. It is no longer sufficient to plan for a single park; no longer sufficient to let open space "take care of itself"; no longer sufficient to consider recreation as a simple adjunct of workday activity. If the realization of Golden Gate Park required concerted effort by the citizens of San Francisco, as history assures us it did, so much the more will be required in this highly developed city over one hundred years later.

The "Improvement Plan for Recreation and Open Space" has been developed in response to these concerns. It is presented for citizen review to encourage discussion of proposed objectives and policies and of implementation programs for recreation and open space. The plan will be revised in accordance with ideas and criticisms received from citizens and public agencies during the review process.

The revised objectives and policies section will be presented to you for adoption as the new recreation and open space element of the Comprehensive Plan; the revised implementation programs will be presented to you for your endorsement.

Sincerely,

*Allan B. Jacobs*  
Allan B. Jacobs  
Director of Planning



# PREFACE

The "Improvement Plan for Recreation and Open Space" is the fourth in a series of proposed revisions of the Comprehensive Plan presented to San Franciscans for their review and discussion.

The purpose of the plan is to propose objectives, policies and programs for meeting San Francisco's recreation and open space needs at the regional, citywide and neighborhood levels.

The plan is organized into three main sections. The first section summarizes the conditions, trends and issues in recreation which are important in developing a plan. Section two recommends a series of objectives and policies for guiding recreational development and decisions in coming years. This section is the heart of the plan and upon completion of the public review process will be revised and proposed for official adoption by the City Planning Commission as the recreation and open space element of the City's Comprehensive Plan. Upon adoption, it will supersede all reference to park and harbor locations in the existing Master Plan. The last section of the plan outlines programs and short-range actions for achieving the objectives and policies recommended in the preceding section. Because the programs are subject to frequent up-dating, they are proposed for City Planning Commission endorsement rather than adoption as part of the Comprehensive Plan.

The work of many citizen organizations is reflected in the proposed plan. Numerous neighborhood associations have been actively involved in planning for their communities. Many of the ideas, policies and proposals in the plan derive directly from proposals of these neighborhood groups. For example, Potrero Hill, the Richmond, Bernal Heights, and Oceanview-Merced Heights-Ingleside have contributed proposals from their neighborhood plans. Many other ideas have been gathered informally in meetings with groups from various neighborhoods. Other recommended policies stem from the work of regional organizations including the Bay Conservation and Development Commission, Association of Bay Area Governments, People for a Golden Gate National Recreation Area, California Tomorrow, People for Open Space, and many groups sponsoring legislation for the coastline and for regional planning and open space agencies. Citywide organizations like SPUR, San Francisco Beautiful, and the Citizens' Waterfront Committee have also been a source of ideas. The San Francisco Recreation and Park Department has been a major contributor in conjunction with a number of other City agencies and public officials.

The plan deals mainly with public facilities and programs. Many private and semi-public organizations provide recreational services. Although these services are essential and should be assisted by the City when possible, the City's jurisdiction pertains most directly to public facilities.

The plan is also limited in its definition of recreation. Many recreational activities -- especially those that can also be classified as cultural or educational -- are not included. They will be covered when possible in subsequent elements of the Comprehensive Plan.

A final important limitation of the plan relates to staffing and programming. While it is recognized that these are equally as important as facilities, the plan attempts to deal only with broad issues such as staff coordination and the responsiveness of programs to differing neighborhood needs. This approach requires that important staff and program details be shaped by people involved at the neighborhood level. This tends to bias the plan toward facilities rather than programs. But it is thought that the City's Comprehensive Plan is not the best vehicle for dealing specifically with the content and management of recreation programs. The Comprehensive Plan is well-suited, however, to guiding the City's decisions relating to the acquisition, maintenance and development of open space and indoor recreation facilities.

## RELATION TO COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING

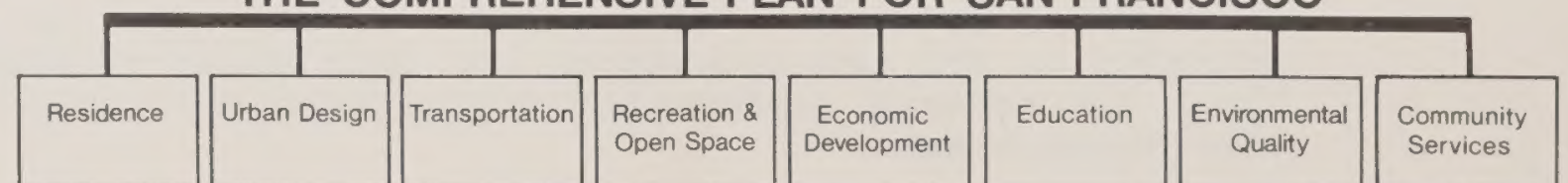
In meeting its responsibilities under the City Charter, the Department of City Planning has begun reorganizing its work program around a new planning and development process involving five functional components: objectives and policies, improvement plans, development strategy, neighborhood planning and development programming. The first phase, policy development, establishes long-range objectives and policies to

guide the City in terms of eight planning elements: residence, urban design, transportation, recreation and open space, education, community services, economic development, and environmental quality. Improvement plans translate these longer-run objectives and policies into shorter-term programs and measurable targets to the extent possible. Development strategy assigns priorities to citywide actions and allocates public resources as necessary to carry out program recommendations. Neighborhood planning enables the interests and needs of community groups to be incorporated into public programs for their neighborhoods. Development programming is the scheduling and guiding of specific, detailed projects, both public and private.

The "Improvement Plan for Recreation and Open Space", as noted, is the fourth major product of San Francisco's new planning and development process, following residence, urban design and transportation. It represents the first two components of the process: long-range objectives and policies and short-term programs based upon them. Parts of the plan, together with the urban design element, contribute to the conservation element of the Comprehensive Plan, which is now required by State law.

The plan is preliminary. It is hoped that in the process of reviewing and revising the plan, citizens and public officials can reach a consensus over recreation and open space objectives and agree on the means for achieving them. After the necessary agreements are reached and the plan is revised and adopted, neighborhood groups can use it as a means for getting recreation and open space improvements in their neighborhoods. It will be useful to citywide organizations interested in preserving and adding to the open space available to all San Franciscans. And finally, it can serve as a basis for coordinating decisions made by the Mayor, Board of Supervisors and numerous City departments and commissions.

## THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN FOR SAN FRANCISCO





# CONTENTS

## IMPROVEMENT PLAN FOR RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE

INTRODUCTION . . . . .	3
SUMMARY OF OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES . . . . .	9
I. THE BAY REGION . . . . .	10
II. THE SAN FRANCISCO SHORELINE . .	12
III. CITYWIDE SYSTEM . . . . .	18
IV. NEIGHBORHOODS . . . . .	22

"Programs Recommended for Carrying Out the Improvement Plan for Recreation and Open Space" included as a separate document



CITY PARKS 1870



CITY PARKS 1920



CITY PARKS 1972

# INTRODUCTION

## CHANGING NEEDS FOR RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE

San Francisco has the potential for an outstanding recreation and open space system. We have a legacy of many fine parks and splendid opportunities for new ones.

Over a hundred years ago far-sighted San Franciscans reserved large sections of undeveloped land for parks. Their successors transformed Golden Gate Park out of sand dunes, planted trees on the Presidio, created parks on many of San Francisco's barren hilltops, and preserved nearly half of the shoreline in landscaped forts and parks.

We tend to regard these as extraordinary feats -- ones that cannot be duplicated today. But a close look at our shoreline, our spectacular topography, and even our built-up areas, discloses several good opportunities for the new parks and recreation facilities which San Francisco needs. Along the northern and eastern waterfront, for example, economic pressures are forcing changes in land uses. As a result, San Francisco has opportunities to improve access to the water and create new shoreline parks. Within densely populated neighborhoods, opportunities exist to build parks on vacant lots, place portable play equipment on streets and school yards, and develop larger recreation facilities in conjunction with residential and commercial uses.

In contemporary terms, working with the private sector to develop a gym over a service station, or raising money to save a small hilltop from development are feats almost comparable to creating a park out of sand dunes. They require considerable time and money and the support of many people. They may produce results less dramatic than those achieved by early San Franciscans, but accomplishments like these, each in its own time, go a long way to meet pressing needs for recreation and open space in a congested city.

Maintaining San Francisco's present system is also a challenge. The maintenance situation is serious. Rising costs, intensified use of existing facilities, shortages in maintenance staff and equipment, and the age and deterioration of park and recreation areas work against maintaining high standards of quality. The Recreation and Park Department is severely hampered by a lack of money and by antiquated maintenance methods. Many recreation facilities are old and in need of major repair or modernization; others have suffered vandalism. Frequency of use



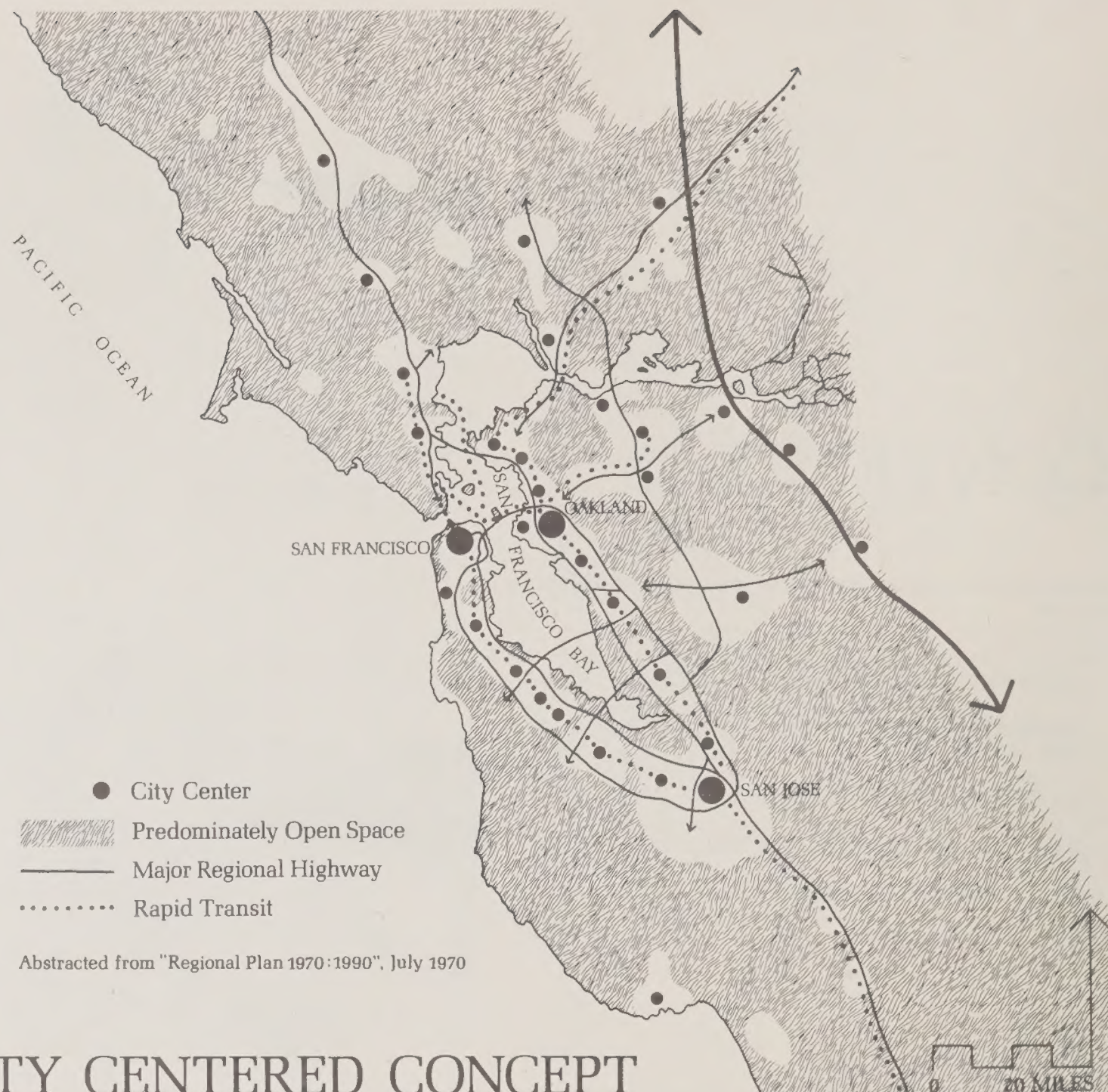
also has a direct effect upon maintenance and staff needs. Heavily used facilities require more maintenance and more staff. For many years, however, the number of recreation facilities has increased and their use has intensified without a corresponding increase in the budget necessary to maintain facilities properly and to offer the programs in demand.

The degree to which the City safeguards the quality of its existing parks and recreation facilities will be an important determinant in the desirability of San Francisco as a place to live and work. Because opportunities to provide many new parks and recreation facilities are limited due to the scarcity and high costs of vacant land, existing facilities represent a major City resource. San Francisco must embark on a large-scale effort to improve and maintain the quality of its present system if it is to meet current and future needs.

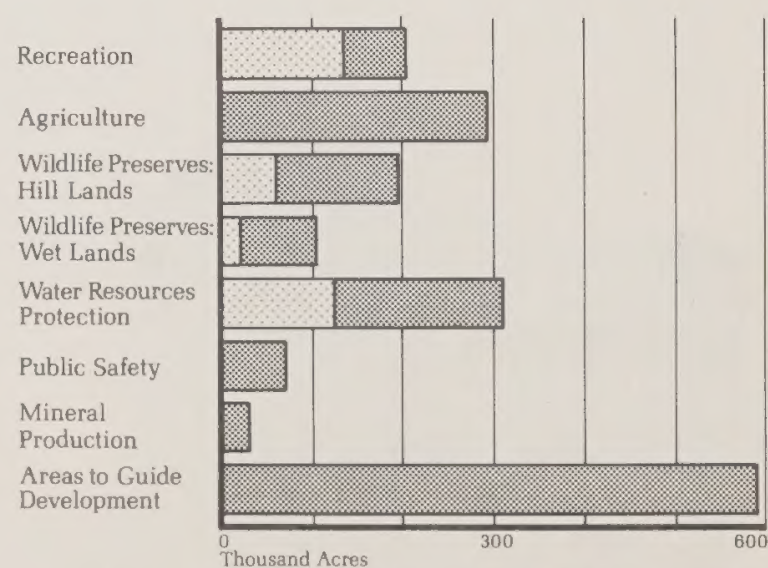
While the City's existing recreation and open space system is its greatest resource, its shoreline holds the most potential for new parks. Surrounded on three sides by water, San Francisco has extraordinary opportunities for water-oriented recreation. The western and northern shorelines are characterized by a considerable amount of open space, but there are only two public recreation facilities on the Bay shoreline from Aquatic Park to the County line. The Bay shoreline has two main recreational advantages over the other parts of the waterfront: its warm climate is conducive to outdoor activities and it is close to several densely populated neighborhoods lacking adequate open space and recreation facilities. Although the Bay shoreline must function for a number of uses including the Port, new maritime parks along the Bay are essential. These new parks can enhance adjacent activities and can contribute significantly to meeting the demand for more recreation space in the city.

Fortunately, San Francisco does not have to rely entirely on its own recreation system. It can benefit from the accomplishments of the region at large, where some progress has been made to preserve open space and develop parks to serve the rapidly developing Bay Area.

The Bay -- the region's most important natural feature -- is now protected from indiscriminate filling. The hills surrounding the Bay still contain large expanses of open space. San Francisco's watershed in San Mateo County protects 23,000 acres of open space, and the East Bay Regional Park system preserves another 22,000 acres. There are approximately 28 State parks within the Bay Area totaling 28,591 acres. The most recent progress in open space preservation has been in Marin County where Point Reyes is being acquired as a



## CITY CENTERED CONCEPT



Source: Economic Impact of a Regional Open Space Program for the San Francisco Bay Area. People for Open Space

[Light Gray Box] Existing Public Open Space, 1968  
 [Dark Gray Box] Needed Public Open Space, 1990 (ABAG Plan)

## REGIONAL OPEN SPACE TARGETS

	1930	1950	1970 <sup>1</sup>	1990 <sup>2</sup>
BAY REGION	1,578,009	2,681,322	4,846,300	7,477,100
ALAMEDA	474,883	704,315	1,134,100	1,680,600
CONTRA COSTA	78,608	298,984	604,800	1,080,000
MARIN	41,648	85,619	225,500	408,700
NAPA	22,897	46,603	85,500	139,800
SAN FRANCISCO	634,394	775,357	734,600	826,600
SAN MATEO	77,405	235,659	592,900	872,500
SANTA CLARA	145,118	290,547	1,086,800	1,784,700
SOLANO	40,834	104,833	182,200	315,800
SONOMA	62,222	103,405	202,900	268,400

1. California State Department of Finance, California Population 1968, January 1969.

2. BATSC, "Controlled Trends" Zonal Forecasts 1965-1980-1990, May 1, 1969, p. 15, 29.

Source: "Regional Plan 1970:1990", Association of Bay Area Governments, July 1970, p. 8.

## POPULATION GROWTH IN BAY REGION



National Seashore, the Nature Conservancy has an option to buy 2,138 acres originally slated for Marinello subdivision, and 200,000 acres of private land in western Marin has been rezoned in an attempt to minimize development while efforts are made to acquire the land for public open space. North Bay counties are experimenting with agricultural zoning and tax incentives to preserve vineyards, orchards and ranch lands. To a lesser degree, similar experiments are under way in the Santa Clara Valley and along the coast.

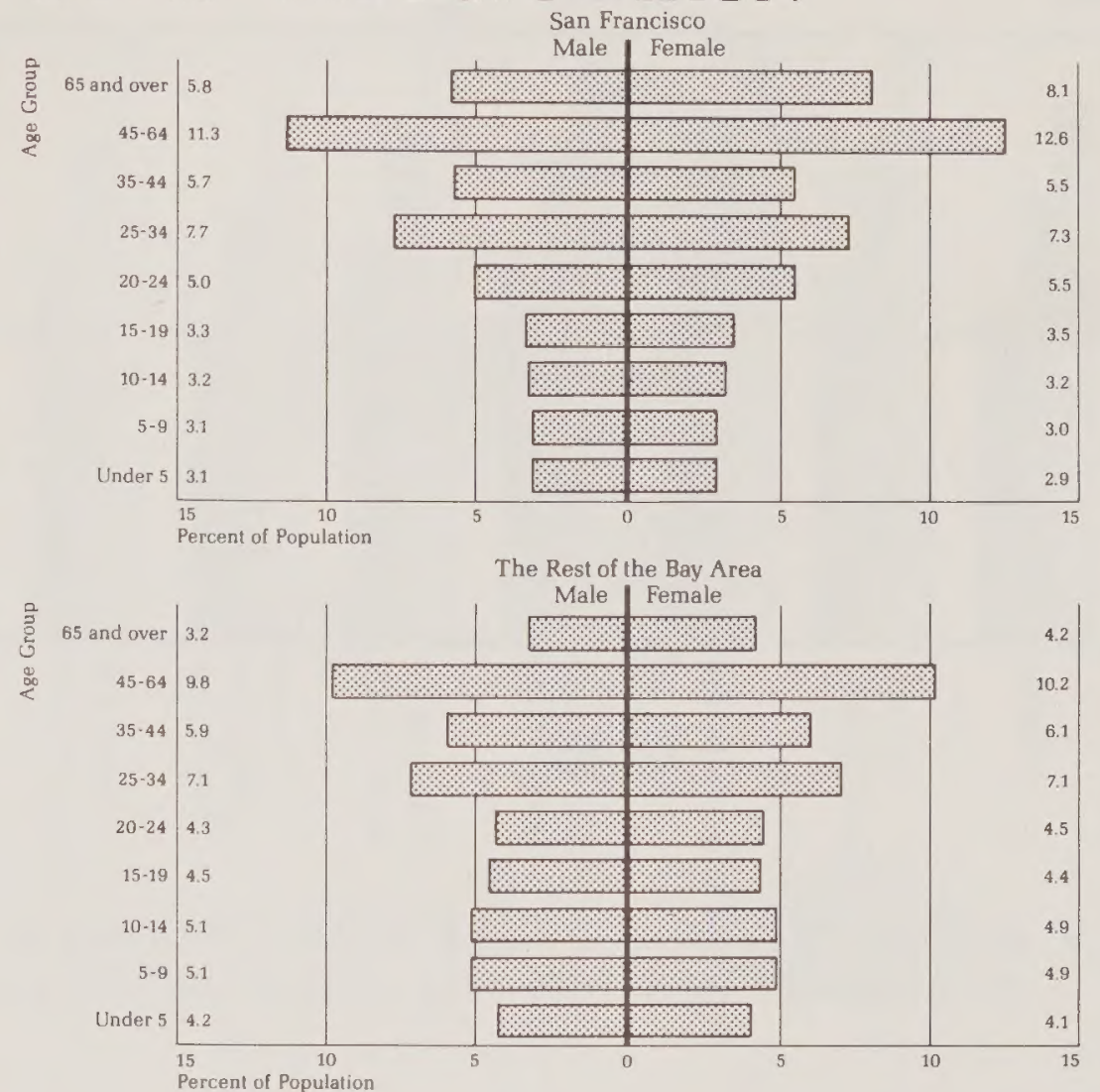
Although promising, these regional accomplishments are not sufficient. They do not preserve the amount of open space needed, nor do they represent any coordinated, long-lasting method for resolving the conflicts between growth and open space preservation. There has been general agreement on the concept of a city-centered region, where open space is used to control urbanization by concentrating development around cities and transportation corridors. But there is no one agency with the responsibility for implementing the city-centered concept. Without such an agency -- with the power to tax and raise money, and the responsibility to regulate land use and transportation, as well as open space -- it will be most difficult to preserve the amount of open space needed in the Bay region.

According to the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG), 3.4 million acres of the 4.5 million acres in the Bay region are needed as open space for conservation, park and recreation purposes, historic or scenic purposes, and for shaping and guiding urban development, a function which is growing in importance. To date, approximately 14.2 percent of this open space target has been met. Less than a half million acres of the land designated in the ABAG "Regional Plan 1970-1990" as permanent open space have been preserved; one and a half million more are needed.

Increased population growth in the Bay Area accompanied by rapid urbanization and consumption of vacant land are working against achieving the ABAG target. During the last 20 years, the population of the nine-county Bay Area grew from 2.6 to 4.6 million people. By 1990, the population is expected to reach 7.2 million. This growth rate is exceptionally high compared with most other parts of the nation; and although projections indicate the Bay Area will grow at a slower rate in the future, land consumption is expected to continue at a rapid pace. Many acres of Bay Area land are developed each year. Orchards are transformed into shopping centers. Ranch lands become subdivisions. And land previously infeasible to develop becomes marketable.

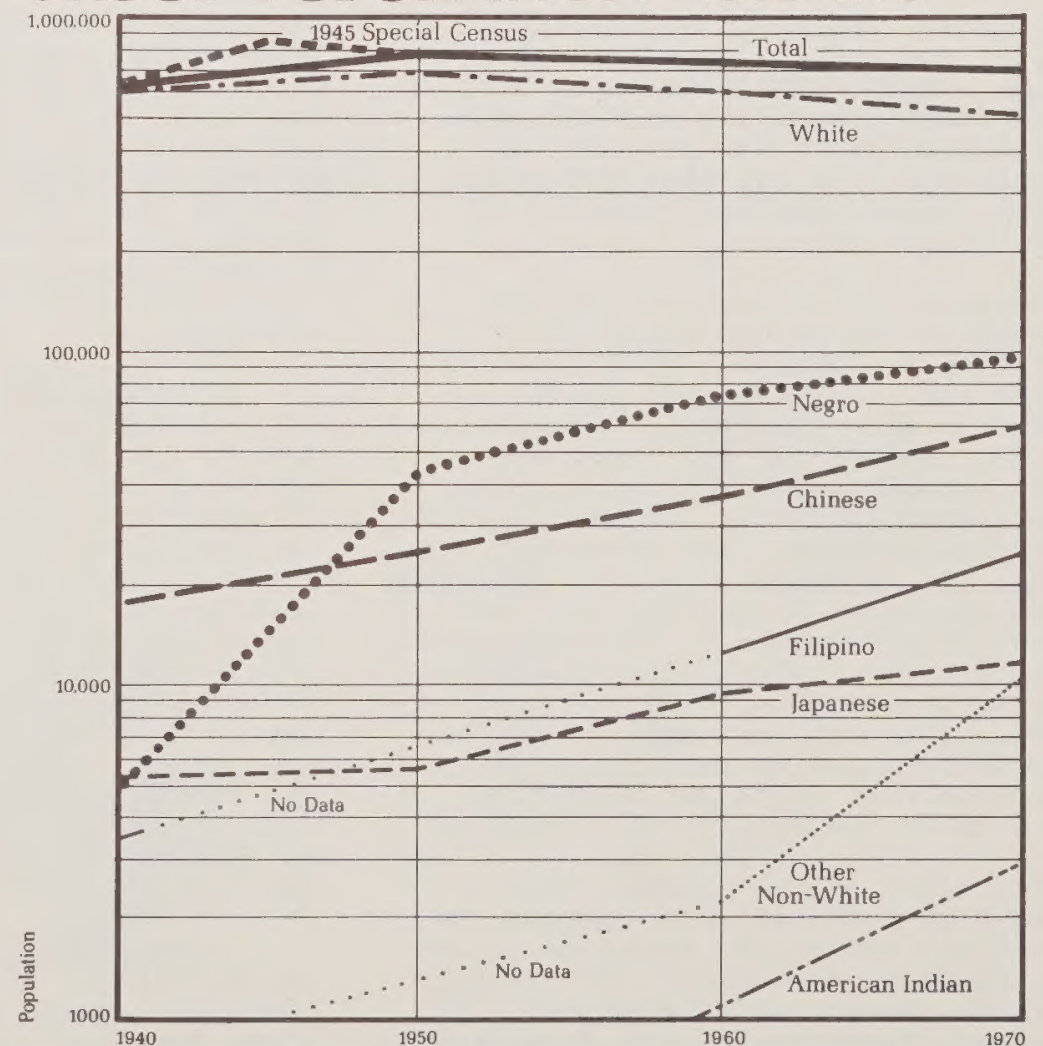
In San Francisco the change is not as drastic. The daytime population is

## AGE AND SEX OF THE POPULATION



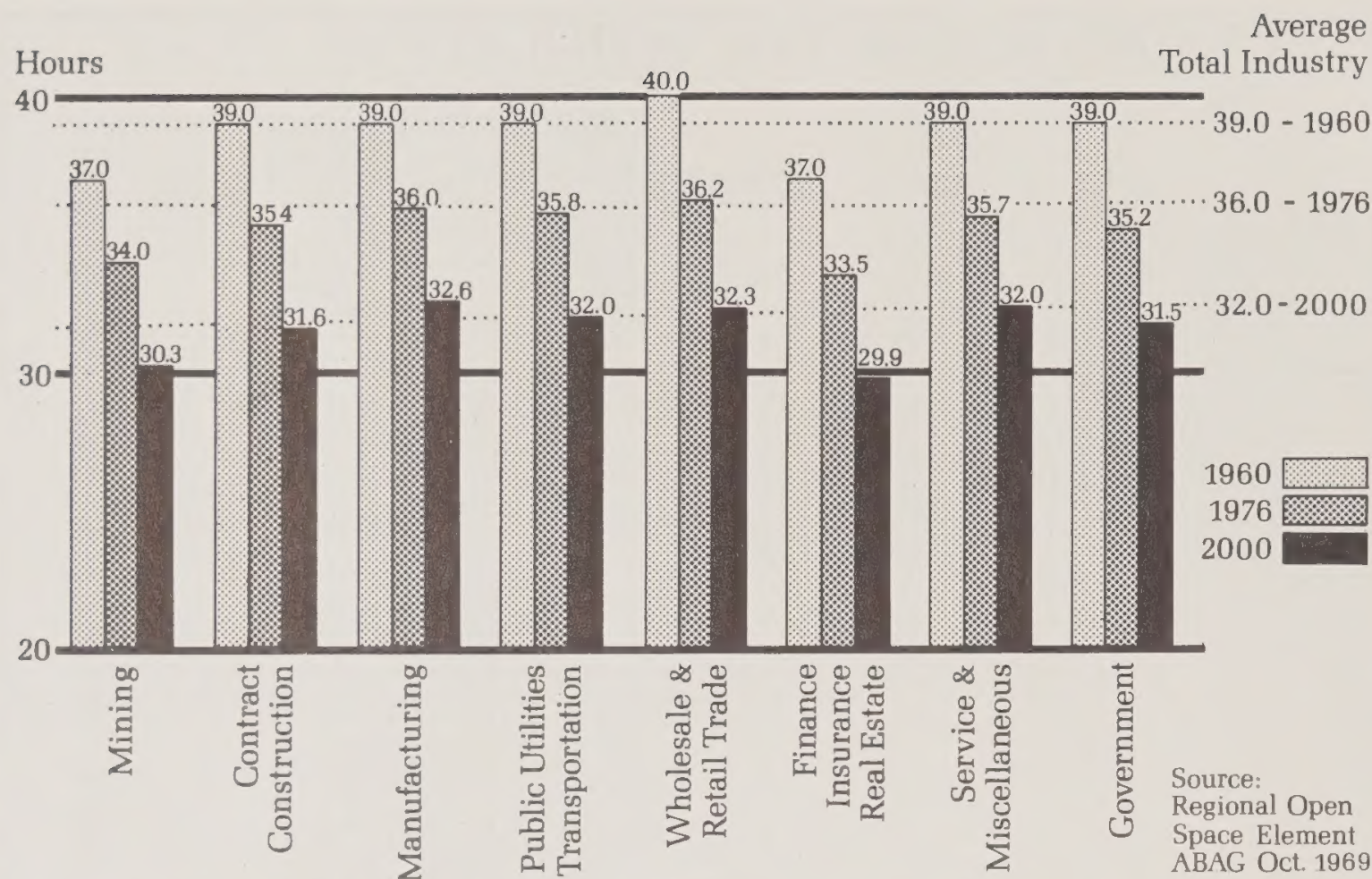
Source: 1970 Census

## S.F. ETHNIC GROUP POPULATION TRENDS



Source: U.S. Census





AVERAGE SCHEDULED WORK WEEK FOR NONAGRICULTURAL WORKERS BY INDUSTRY 1960 AND PROJECTED, 1976 AND 2000

growing, and the downtown skyline reflects the change. But most of the daytime growth represents commuters. The resident population is declining. It decreased by 24,642 persons, or 3.3 percent, over the last ten years and now stands relatively stable at about 716,000 people.

Despite this stabilization, the characteristics of San Francisco's population are changing in ways which have marked effects on the demand for recreation and open space. Compared with the rest of the Bay Area, San Francisco's school-age population is proportionally smaller and its over-45 population larger. Over the last decade, the population over 65 years of age increased by 6.7 percent from 94,000 to approximately 100,000 people. During the same period, the population under 14 years of age declined by 23,500. This represented a 27 percent decrease in children under five years and a 9 percent decrease in children from 5 to 14 years old.

The trend is due largely to the movement of families with children to the suburbs and to the declining birth rate occurring throughout the nation. While the younger population has decreased dramatically, San Francisco

still has a rapidly growing teen-age and young adult population. Its population also includes an unusual proportion of people in the 25 to 34 year category, reflecting the immigration to the city of younger people looking for jobs. Between 1960 and 1970, the nonwhite population increased by 69,000 persons. A significant part of this increase consisted of new immigrants of Chinese ancestry.

These changes have important implications for recreation planning since demands for recreation and open space differ among age and ethnic groups. Geographical location of these groups is also important. Many of San Francisco's elderly people live in downtown residential areas virtually devoid of recreation and park facilities. The ethnic populations tend to be concentrated in high-density districts which have a shortage of public and private open space. In general, the elderly and the ethnic population groups tend to be more dependent on the provision of public recreation than young adults and the more economically mobile majority.

In addition to the impact of population changes on recreation needs, two trends have made recreation and open space more important today than in the

past. Increased leisure time combined with greater mobility has boosted the significance of recreation. Concern over physical fitness and the desire to develop interests outside of work are also evident. As a result, recreation is no longer confined primarily to vacations and holiday weekends. Although the four-day week is by no means the general rule, people are recreating more on regular weekends and after work than they have ever done before.

This change has resulted in a demand for more sophisticated recreation. Sales in special equipment for backpacking, golfing, skin diving and the like reflect this change. So does the increased demand for activities as diverse as yoga, weaving and tennis. Team sports are popular, especially when coached by professionals. In general, more people use their leisure time to learn different sports and new skills. Consequently in San Francisco, schools, private clubs, and public recreation centers are called upon to develop more varied recreation programs staffed by experts.

Similarly, because many people are more mobile today, an equal diversity is needed away from home. San Franciscans need places to "get away to" where they can hike or fish, go camping and enjoy an open and natural environment away from the pressure and congestion of urban life.

Even with an extremely mobile population, access is a key factor in park use. If people cannot get to parks easily, their recreational value is reduced. At the same time, access must be designed to preserve the natural qualities of parks. At the regional level, the most direct approach to this problem is to locate parks as close to densely populated cities as possible and to protect wilderness areas either by controlling access or by limiting the intensity of recreational uses.

In the city, the problem of access is somewhat different. Ideally, every San Franciscan should be served by a park within walking distance of his home. The park need not have a comprehensive recreation program, but it should be close. Proximity of neighborhood parks is important, regardless of the mobility of the population.

According to a survey\* of park users completed for the Department of City Planning, most park users come to the parks directly from home or school or stop at parks on the way home from work. Except for parks with special attractions, few parks draw users from farther

\*"Open Space Study, Report I: Survey and Analysis of Existing Conditions", Okamoto-Liskamm, December, 1969.

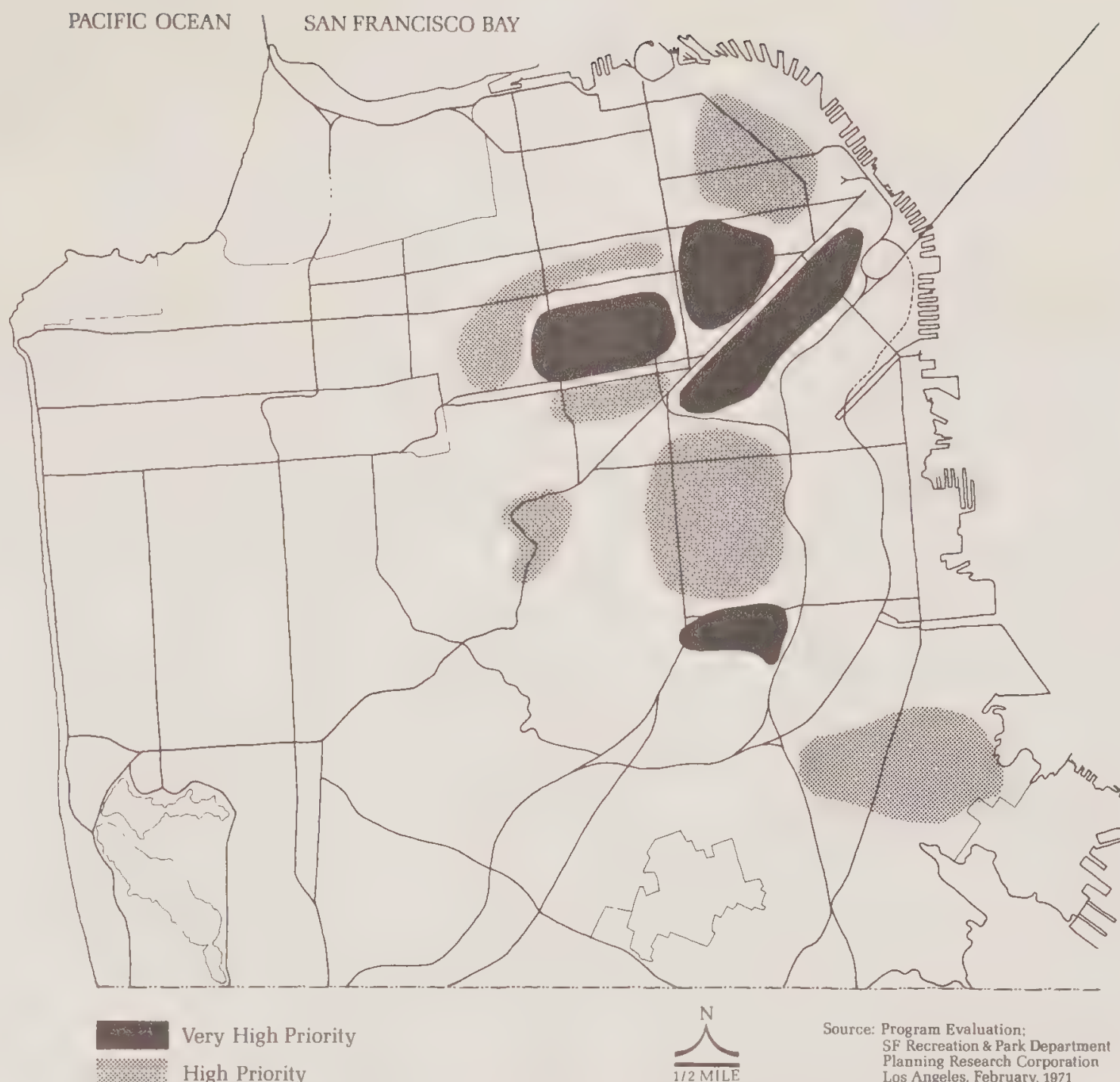


than a half-mile radius. People will go greater distances for special parks and recreation programs, but more than half of those interviewed wanted parks to be within walking distance of their homes. More people walk than drive to parks, although the percentage of those driving increases on weekends. Despite the fact that many park users have access to automobiles and even more can be served by public transit, they prefer neighborhood parks to be easily accessible to pedestrians. They want parks where they can sit, relax and play. Although people tend to expect more from larger recreation centers in the way of programs geared to community interests, they ask little out of the ordinary in neighborhood parks. Users simply want them to be close to home, safe, and well-maintained.

San Francisco has over one hundred parks and recreation centers which function mainly for neighborhood use. While the number of neighborhood parks and facilities may be impressive, they are not well distributed throughout the city. Over the years, there were more opportunities to build new parks in the less developed parts of the city. The older, more densely populated areas contained few sites suitable for parks; and those which were available in built-up areas tended to be costly compared to land in outlying neighborhoods. In this manner, the historic and economic development of San Francisco combined to create an unequal distribution of facilities. This inequality is not necessarily undesirable in itself, but when neighborhoods lacking parks and recreation centers also have relatively high needs for such facilities, then the situation warrants correction.

Neighborhoods with the greatest need for recreation facilities and open space have been identified in a comprehensive study\* completed in 1971 for the Recreation and Park Department. The selection of these neighborhoods was based on measurement of a number of need and resource indices. Median income, population density, delinquency rate, elderly and youth population were measured against the number of recreation centers available, acres of recreational facilities and recreation staff hours allotted to each neighborhood. The results indicated that there is a serious inequity in the distribution of recreation facilities among the city's neighborhoods. Some neighborhoods have adequate and even surplus recreation facilities relative to current needs; others have few or no parks or playgrounds.

\*"Program Evaluation, San Francisco Recreation and Park Department", Planning Research Corporation, February, 1971.



## COMPARATIVE RECREATION PRIORITIES

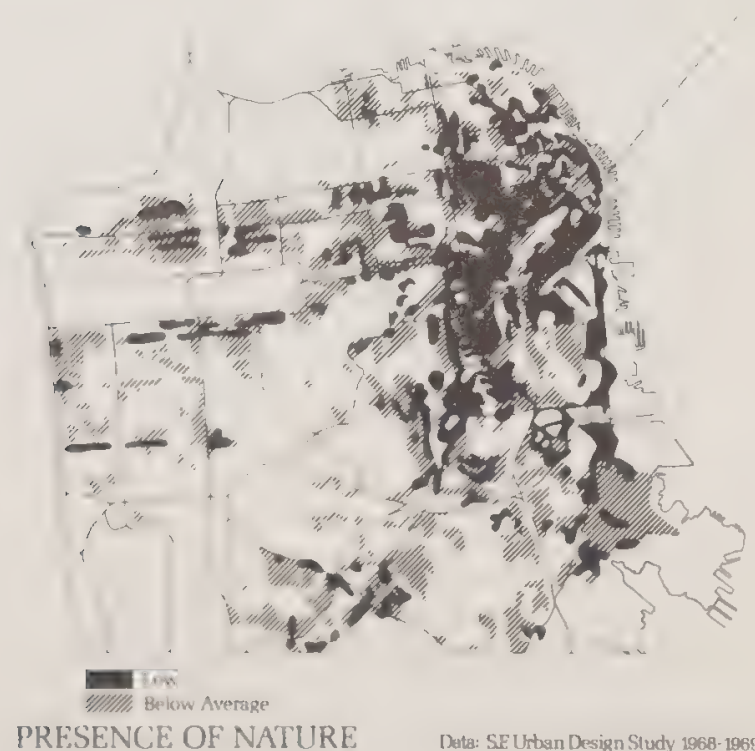
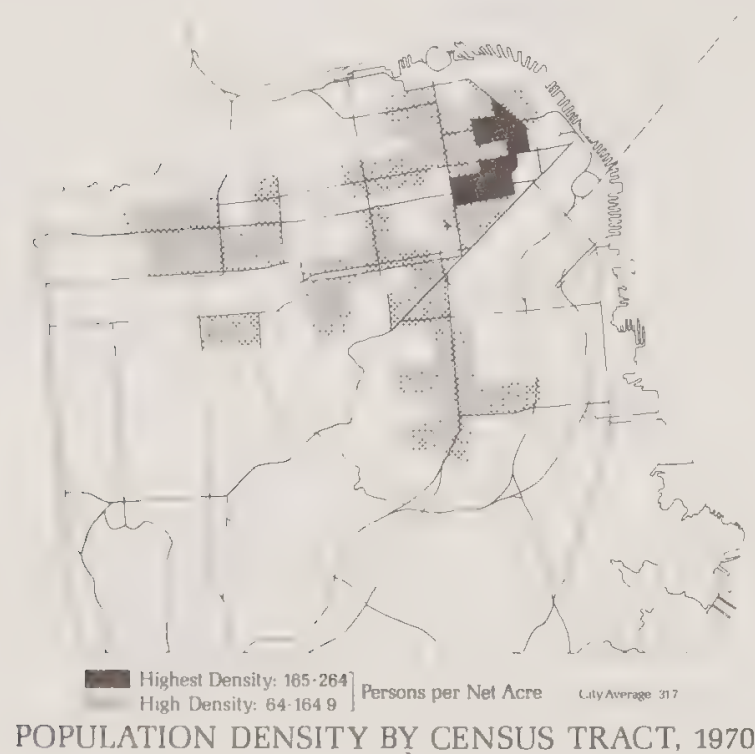


CONCENTRATIONS OF SCHOOL AGE PERSONS, 1970



CONCENTRATIONS OF ELDERLY PERSONS, 1970





These results were checked against data from the 1970 Census and a block-by-block survey of the city assessing distance to open space. All data sources confirmed critical open space and recreation deficiencies in Chinatown, the Mission, the downtown residential areas, Western Addition (including areas south and west of redevelopment), Haight-Fillmore, South Bayshore and Bernal Hill. Other neighborhoods in the Oceanview-Merced-Ingleside and Inner Sunset districts showed needs in some but not all indices. Correcting the deficiencies in these neighborhoods and achieving a more equitable distribution of recreation facilities based on community needs is an important City objective.

#### SETTING THE BASIS FOR RECREATION POLICIES

The objectives and policies recommended in the "Improvement Plan for Recreation and Open Space" are intended to help the City define what is needed and how funds should be allocated. At all levels of policy -- regional, shoreline, citywide and neighborhood -- several basic themes recur. The plan, for example, stresses the importance of buying existing undeveloped land as soon as possible. Many open spaces which should be preserved or converted to recreational uses are currently slated for private or public development. This is true in San Francisco as well as in the region. Even in instances where land is not immediately threatened, early acquisition is desirable. With the price of land rising at the rate of five to ten percent annually, land values are doubling every ten years. Deferring acquisition undoubtedly means higher costs in achieving local and regional open space objectives.

Much of this acquisition will have to be accomplished by government. Although this is not a new sphere of government involvement, there must be a recognition that public purchase and control of land is a key factor toward achieving objectives and policies recommended in the plan.

All levels of government have long been in the business of acquiring and managing public open space. Traditionally, this responsibility has been shared with individual donors, recreation organizations and foundations. But because land costs are high and vacant land is being rapidly consumed for other purposes, it is unrealistic to expect that private groups are capable of preserving the amount of open space needed. There is an urgency for the government to act early and, in most cases, to assume full responsibility for the preservation of open space.

It is equally unrealistic to expect that existing public open spaces can be maintained at current levels of appropriations. More use of recreation space

is bound to intensify problems of management and upkeep. For this reason, another theme of the plan is that adequate public money for quality maintenance is as important as a sustained program for open space acquisition.

Aside from action to increase funding, each government jurisdiction should systematically reassess current publicly held land for its open space potential. Some land may be surplus to other uses or capable of serving several public functions simultaneously. Governments will also need better administrative organization to be more effective in the field of open space preservation. At the regional level, for example, a government agency should be created with both the jurisdiction and the powers necessary to regulate development and acquire open space. In addition, the various levels of government should re-examine laws, taxes and land use regulations to see where revisions can encourage preservation of private open space.

While government involvement should be broadened considerably, it is unlikely that public resources will ever be sufficient to meet the full range of recreational needs. The plan's policies are consequently based on the view that public funds should be carefully applied where the need is the greatest and where private development cannot be expected to provide recreation and open space in conjunction with new development. This view which links resources to priorities is another basic theme expressed frequently throughout the plan. It means that private developments, especially those in residential neighborhoods and in areas with high recreational potential, should be expected to provide usable outdoor space, to complement the public open space system. Under this approach, scarce public resources can be used to meet the most critical needs elsewhere.

The plan which follows is concerned about residents of the entire Bay Area and the visitors who come to San Francisco; but it is concerned chiefly with those who live here. Within San Francisco, recreation demands are extensive and it would be a mistake to underestimate the problems involved, the costs and the length of time it will take to meet San Francisco's need for open space and recreation facilities. Lack of funds, as with so many other urban problems, is the biggest hurdle. Recreation and open space development must compete with other urgent public needs for scarce local and Federal funds available for this purpose. This is all the more reason why the City should be explicit about where facilities and space are needed most. Only through planning and public discussion can limited resources be wisely allocated to assure that recreational needs are met.



# SUMMARY OF RECREATION & OPEN SPACE OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES

## I•THE BAY REGION

■ OBJECTIVE  
Preserve large areas of open space sufficient to meet the long-range needs of the Bay region.

▣ POLICY 1  
Protect the natural character of regional open spaces and place high priority on acquiring open spaces noted for unique natural qualities.

▣ POLICY 2  
Increase the accessibility of regional parks by locating new parks near population centers, establishing low user costs and improving public transit service to parks.

▣ POLICY 3  
Establish a regional agency responsible for open space regulation, acquisition and management.

## II•THE SAN FRANCISCO SHORELINE

■ OBJECTIVE  
Maintain an unbroken stretch of natural public open space from Fort Funston to the eastern edge of the Presidio. Develop open spaces and recreation facilities which complement the urban character of the northern waterfront and Bay shoreline.

▣ POLICY 1  
Require all new development within the shoreline zone to conform with shoreline land use provisions, to incorporate open space, to improve access to the water, and to meet urban design policies.

▣ POLICY 2  
Improve the quality of existing shoreline recreation areas.

▣ POLICY 3  
Provide new public parks and recreation facilities along the shoreline.

▣ POLICY 4  
Preserve the open space and natural character of the Presidio.

## III•CITYWIDE SYSTEM

■ OBJECTIVE  
Develop a diversified and balanced system of citywide recreation and open space.

▣ POLICY 1  
Preserve public open space.

▣ POLICY 2  
Acquire additional citywide open space for public use.

▣ POLICY 3  
Gradually eliminate nonrecreational uses in parks and playgrounds and reduce automobile traffic in and around public open spaces.

▣ POLICY 4  
Require usable outdoor open space in new residential development. Encourage creation of recreation space in existing development.

## IV•NEIGHBORHOODS

■ OBJECTIVE  
Provide opportunities for recreation and the enjoyment of open space in every San Francisco neighborhood.

▣ POLICY 1  
Make better use of existing facilities.

▣ POLICY 2  
Acquire new park and recreation space to serve San Francisco's residential neighborhoods.

▣ POLICY 3  
Give high priority for recreation improvements to high-need neighborhoods.



# I · THE BAY REGION · OBJECTIVE AND POLICIES

## ■ OBJECTIVE

Preserve large areas of open space sufficient to meet the long-range needs of the Bay region.

The Bay Area has developed to the point where an extensive regional open space system is needed. Such a system should preserve undeveloped or predominantly undeveloped land or water area which has value for 1) conservation of land and other natural resources, 2) recreation and park land, 3) historic or scenic purposes, 4) controlling the location and form of urban development, and 5) agriculture.

Areas which should remain in open space because they have one or more of these characteristics have been identified in the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) Regional Plan and the Bay Conservation and Development Commission (BCDC) Bay Plan. Some areas include major natural features of the region such as coastal plains, beaches, portions of the Bay and its shoreline, vineyards, or forests. Other areas have been designated as open space because of the natural resources they contain, or because of their proximity to urbanizing areas. Taken together, the areas designated in these plans provide a sound basis for developing a city-centered region with sufficient open space. As additional plans are completed for the coastline and other areas, they should be used as a basis for acquiring open space.

## ■ POLICY 1

Protect the natural character of regional open spaces and place high priority on acquiring open spaces noted for unique natural qualities.

Unlike urban parks, which usually are man-made, regional open spaces often encompass delicate ecological systems which are strained when subjected to intensive recreational use. Since natural open spaces are not easily obtained in the city, it is in San Francisco's interest that new regional parks are acquired as needed and that existing open spaces are not overloaded or environmentally damaged. The city also has a special interest in seeing that the regional open spaces acquired supplement the types of recreation offered in the city.

In general, recreational activities in regional open spaces should be oriented around the natural qualities of the area. Natural site characteristics should be the primary determinants of the types of recreational activities allowed. Construction should be limited to facilities which support these activities. Fire and access roads and parking facilities or other necessary improvements should be designed for minimal environmental impact. Use of the automobile should be carefully limited. In most cases, the automobile should be relied upon for initial access only; for internal circulation, emphasis should be on foot trails or some form of public transit. When supporting facilities are required, they should be thoughtfully designed, inconspicuous, and in keeping with the surrounding environment.

## ■ POLICY 2

Increase the accessibility of regional parks by locating new parks near population centers, establishing low user costs and improving public transit service to parks.

Many State and National Parks are located a considerable distance from densely populated urban areas. Automobile access is usually required. Most of these parks are excellent for vacations, but they are often impractical for weekend or day use.

While overloading parks should be avoided, cost or inconvenience should not in itself exclude people from parks. Rather, user costs should be held low, accessibility improved, and new regional parks located close to cities. At the same time access is made easier, recreational activities in parks should be carefully managed to prevent overuse and environmental damage.

Improved public transit is key to increasing the accessibility of regional parks. Frequent and convenient transit service will make it easier for people who do not own cars to reach these areas, encourage people with cars to leave them at home when going to the parks, and reduce the impact of the automobile on the natural landscape. Transit can also be used to shift demand from crowded parks to lesser known facilities.

## ■ POLICY 3

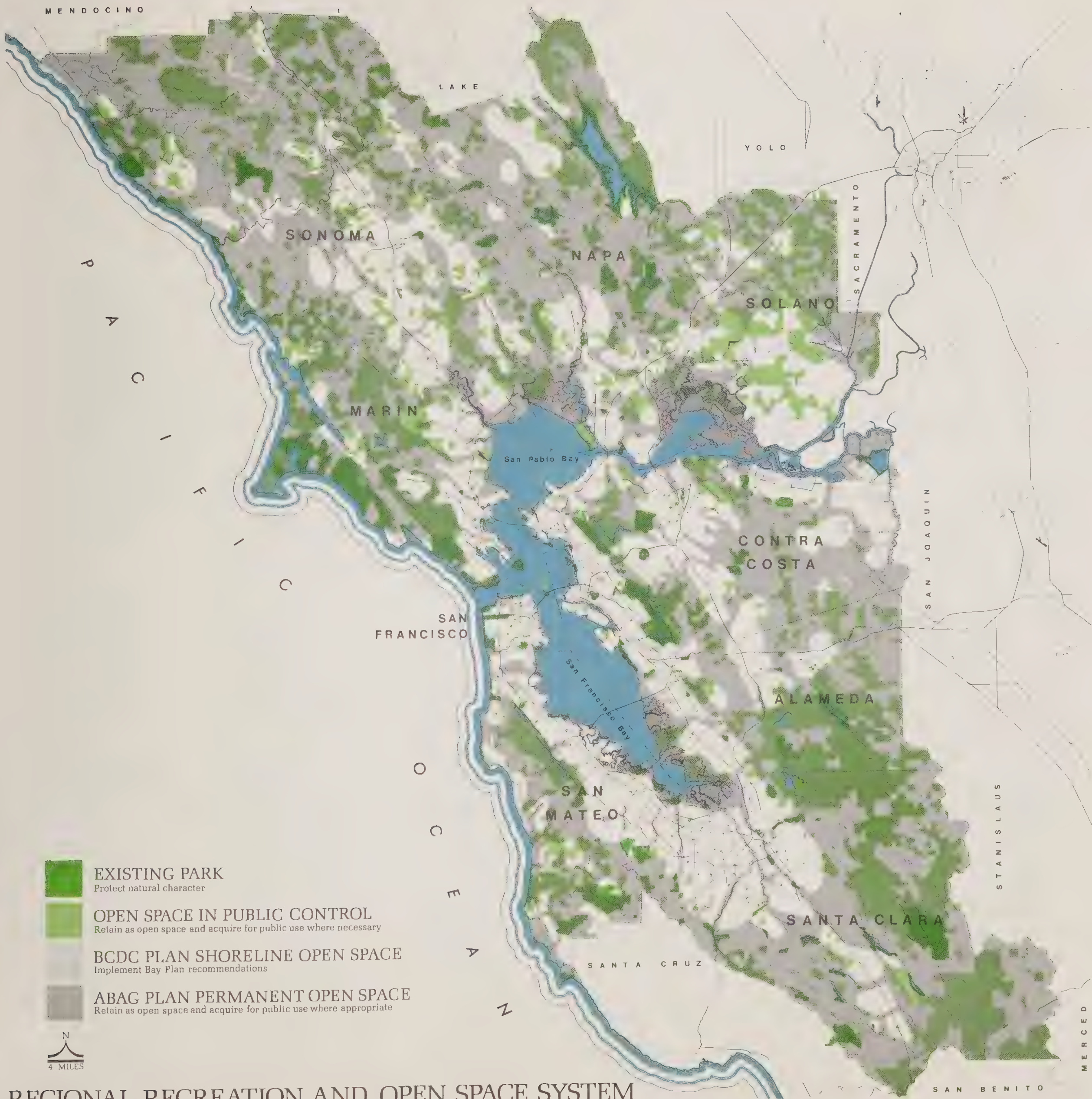
Establish a regional agency responsible for open space regulation, acquisition and management.

Preserving a regional open space system is beyond the scope of the seventy-odd local governments in the nine-county Bay Area. Valuable open spaces cross city and county lines and individual municipalities have neither the regulatory powers nor the funds to retain them. Preservation of such spaces will depend upon regional action.

Regional open space should be handled by a regional agency. Because of the interdependence of open space, transportation, air and water quality, and other regional issues, it may eventually be desirable to consolidate the open space agency with other regional agencies. The Bay Area should not, however, make a regional open space agency contingent upon a more comprehensive regional organization. The rapid rate of urbanization in the Bay Area necessitates prompt establishment of an agency equipped to develop and maintain a regional open space system.

The form that such an agency should take has been the subject of extensive study and discussion. There is general agreement on some basic points: the agency should have the authority to 1) enact an official regional plan and have temporary permit powers over all open spaces of regional value until the plan is adopted, 2) acquire open space through the eminent domain process, and 3) raise money to purchase, manage and develop the regional open space system through methods such as grant application and taxation. Since property taxes are closely related to open space preservation, the new agency should also be able to regulate tax policy on open space designated in the regional plan.





MENDOCINO

LAKE

YOLO

SONOMA

NAPA

SOLANO

SACRAMENTO

MARIN

San Pablo Bay

CONTRA  
COSTA

SAN  
FRANCISCO

San Francisco Bay

ALAMEDA

SAN  
MATEO

SAN JOAQUIN

STANISLAUS

SANTA CRUZ

SANTA CLARA

MERCED

SAN BENITO

**EXISTING PARK**  
Protect natural character

**OPEN SPACE IN PUBLIC CONTROL**  
Retain as open space and acquire for public use where necessary

**BCDC PLAN SHORELINE OPEN SPACE**  
Implement Bay Plan recommendations

**ABAG PLAN PERMANENT OPEN SPACE**  
Retain as open space and acquire for public use where appropriate



# REGIONAL RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE SYSTEM



# II • THE S.F. SHORELINE • OBJECTIVE AND POLICIES

## ■ OBJECTIVE

Maintain an unbroken stretch of natural public open space from Fort Funston to the eastern edge of the Presidio. Develop open spaces and recreation facilities which complement the urban character of the northern waterfront and Bay shoreline.

The Pacific Ocean, San Francisco Bay and their respective shorelines are the most important natural resources in San Francisco. Their open space potential is considerable. Together they offer unlimited opportunities for water-oriented recreation. They are the pride of San Francisco's views and the source of the city's agreeable climate.

The recreation potential of the shoreline, however, has yet to be realized. San Francisco's shoreline accommodates several uses including open space, military, port, industrial and commercial uses. Despite the fact that a sizable proportion of the shoreline is in public ownership, access to the water, except at the ocean, is sporadic and limited; very little of the eastern shoreline and northern waterfront has been developed for recreation and open space.

The challenge facing the City is to add more open space along the Bay while maintaining other essential waterfront uses. On the western and northern shoreline, the objective is different. A significant amount of public open space has already been retained, but permanent preservation of a few prime open spaces has not been insured. The western and northern shoreline should function as a long unbroken stretch of open space; its natural qualities should be preserved and should complement the more urban character of new open spaces along the Bay.

## ■ POLICY 1

Require all new development within the shoreline zone to conform with shoreline land use provisions, to incorporate open space, to improve access to the water, and to meet urban design policies.

In order to protect the shoreline and safeguard the public interest in it, the following policies should be applied to new shoreline developments:

### *Land Use Provisions*

Priority Land Uses -- The most important uses of the shoreline should be those providing substantial long-term public benefits that cannot be provided on other sites within the city. Water-related public recreation and open space, port uses and water-related

industries are included in this category.

Restricted Land Uses -- Office and residential uses and water-related commercial uses such as restaurants, hotels and shops are appropriate only in the areas designated in this plan and in the Northern Waterfront and South Bay-shore elements of the Comprehensive Plan. These uses provide limited public benefits and should be restricted to areas which are not needed for priority uses.

Prohibited Land Uses -- All developments which do not fall in the previous two categories are not acceptable shoreline land uses. More specifically, industry that is not dependent upon use of the water should not be permitted. Airports and at grade or elevated free-ways should not be permitted. Uses such as these should be located away from the shoreline. Finally, all uses which will adversely affect water quality should be prohibited.

### *Open Space Requirements*

All new shoreline developments, except low density residential ones, should provide and maintain on their sites ground level open space, well situated for public access and designed for maximum physical and visual contact with the water. Water-related industry may provide overlooks instead of ground level open space or it may substitute off-site open space on another part of the shoreline.

The size of the open space provided should directly relate to the size of the new development; the larger the development, the more open space it should provide.

The types of open space provided in new developments will depend upon the nature of the sites; however, as much as feasible they should meet the recreational needs of adjacent neighborhoods, especially those deficient in recreation space, and add to the variety of recreational facilities along the entire shoreline.

### *Urban Design Specifications*

In urban design terms, new developments should make maximum use of their shoreline locations and complement the shoreline as San Francisco's most important natural resource. More specifically, new developments should:

- maximize public access to the water, both visual and physical
- give careful consideration to environmental factors to make

- shoreline open spaces more pleasant and usable, particularly in windy areas
- meet the more specific design policies and principles in the urban design element of the Comprehensive Plan
- adhere to City Planning Code height and bulk limits.

These policies governing land use, open space and urban design should be applied to all new developments within the Shoreline Zone designated in this plan. The zone covers the city's entire shoreline but varies in the degree to which it extends inland depending on the quantity of existing open space and public recreation facilities in the area and on the amount of new development anticipated. For the most part, developments at the water's edge are of primary concern. There may be developments further inland, however, which affect physical and visual contact with the water or affect the use of the shoreline for open space. Shoreline policies should be applied to these developments as well as those within the designated zone.

## ■ POLICY 2

Improve the quality of existing shoreline recreation areas.

Most of San Francisco's shoreline recreation areas are located on the headlands and on the western and northern shorelines. Problems of accessibility, maintenance, and pollution prevent many of these areas from being used to full potential.

Access to some areas, such as Ocean Beach, is hindered by heavy and fast-moving traffic. Better trails and stairways to the water are needed along the headlands. Other areas are difficult to locate, and the public is unsure whether places like Fort Funston and Lands End are open for public use. Pollution curtails use of some parts of the shoreline for certain recreational activities.

Simple public improvements such as effective signs, well marked trails, safety features, landscaping for wind-breaks, and diversion of traffic can promote greater use of these shoreline areas. Good maintenance is also required. Improving water quality will be a more difficult task. The City should prohibit developments which threaten to cause a deterioration in water quality, endanger marine life or prevent necessary flushing of the Bay by currents.



### ▣ POLICY 3

Provide new public parks and recreation facilities along the shoreline.

The City cannot meet its shoreline recreation needs simply by improving existing recreation areas and by applying the guidelines governing new development in the Shoreline Zone. Certainly, recreation space in private developments and places to fish or view port operations will help realize the shoreline's recreation potential. But major new parks are also needed.

Most of the new parks should be located on the Bay shoreline between Aquatic Park and the County line. This is the area most deficient in shoreline open space. It also has the most potential for meeting the critical recreation needs of neighborhoods in the eastern half of the city.

In accord with this policy, major new maritime parks should be developed at Candlestick Point, India Basin, Warm Water Cove, Central Basin, China Basin Channel, the Ferry Building and along the northern waterfront south of Pier 45.

Although the Bay shoreline should have priority for new public parks, a few parcels on the western shoreline should also be acquired for public open space. Among these parcels, the Cliff House and Sutro Baths are the most essential. If the private golf course south of Fort Funston is discontinued, it also should be preserved as public open space. Acquisition or preservation of these three main parcels will insure that the western shoreline remains a long, unbroken stretch of natural open space.

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## WESTERN SHORELINE PLAN

Specific policies for each site are intended to supplement the more general objective and policies for the shoreline.

### OLYMPIC COUNTRY CLUB

Retain entire area as open space. If private golf course use is discontinued, acquire for public recreation and open space.

### FORT FUNSTON - Federal portion

If the Fort property is declared surplus for military use by the Federal government, acquire for public open space and preserve natural characteristics of entire site. Eliminate obsolete military structures and return area to natural landscape.

### FORT FUNSTON - City portion

Conserve natural land features and ecology of this park. Access paths should be designed to have minimum effect on the natural environment.

### GREAT HIGHWAY

Develop entire Great Highway right-of-way into a smooth curvilinear recreational drive through a park area. Emphasize slow pleasure traffic and safe pedestrian access to beach. Provide new parking areas on beach side where curvature allows and create new playgrounds on inland side for adjacent neighborhoods.

### OCEAN BEACH

Continue as natural beach area for public recreation. Improve and stabilize sand dunes where necessary with natural materials to control erosion.

### GOLDEN GATE PARK

Strengthen visual and physical connection between the park and beach. Improve the western end of the park for public recreation and when possible eliminate the sewer treatment facilities.

### SEAL ROCKS

Maintain in public ownership and protect natural habitat for seals.

### CLIFF HOUSE - SUTRO BATHS

Acquire for public use all privately owned property in area commonly known as Cliff House/Sutro Baths. Develop as an 11-acre nature-oriented shoreline park. Limited commercial-recreation uses may be permitted if public ownership is retained and if development is carefully controlled to preserve natural characteristics of the site.

### SUTRO HEIGHTS PARK

Continue use as park and preserve natural features.

### LINCOLN PARK

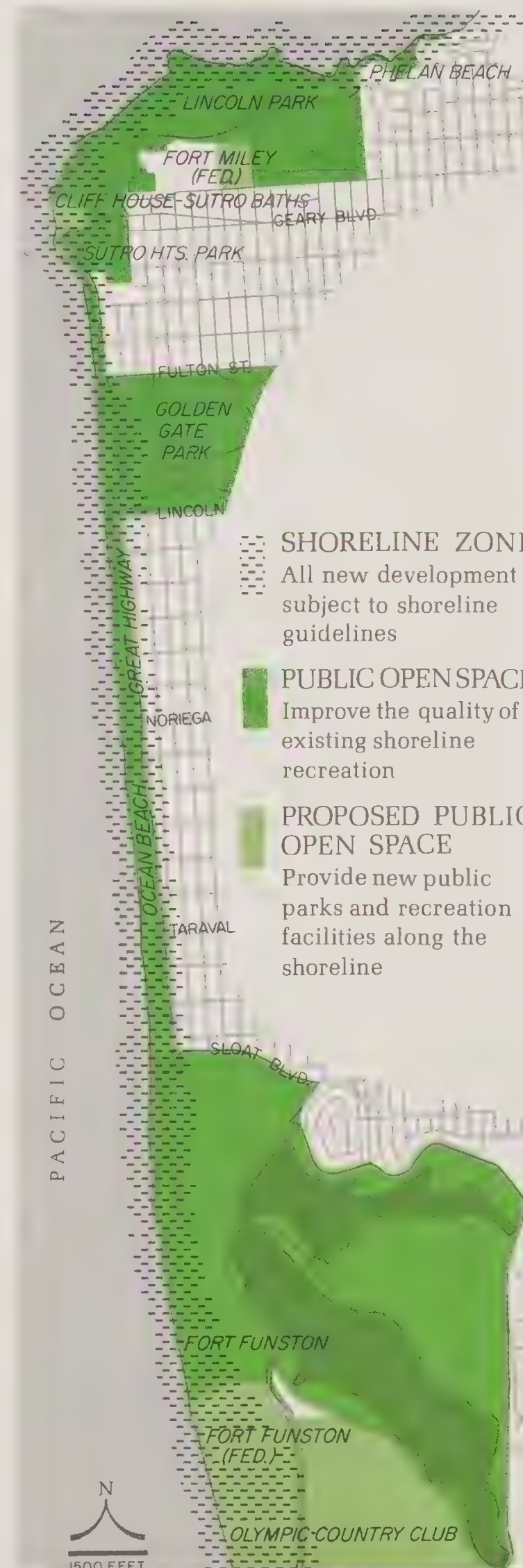
Continue public recreation facilities on areas already developed. Conserve remainder as natural open space with a minimum of improvements.

### FORT MILEY (Federal)

If Fort property is declared surplus by the Federal government, acquire for public recreation and open space.

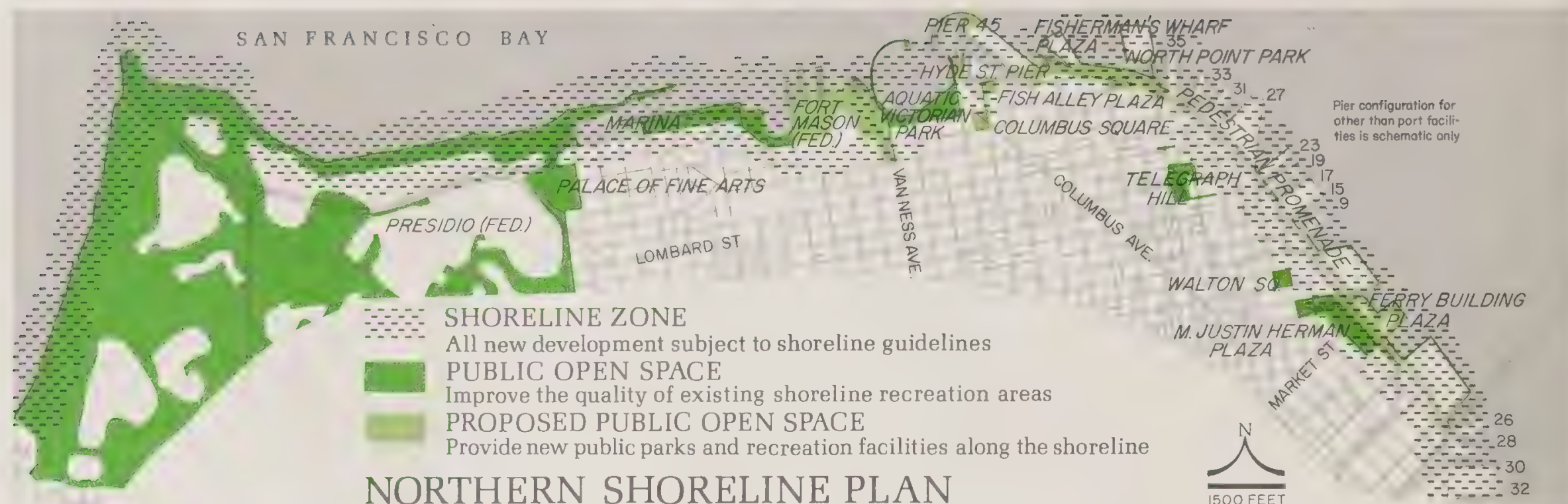
### PHELAN BEACH STATE PARK

Continue use as a public recreation area.



## WESTERN SHORELINE PLAN





## NORTHERN SHORELINE PLAN

Specific policies for each site are intended to supplement the more general objective and policies for the shoreline.

### PRESIDIO (Federal)

Refer to Objective II, Shoreline Policy 4.

### MARINA - Presidio to Gashouse Cove

Continue as location of public marina. Maintain and enhance full public access to all maritime recreational activities. Insure that any new trafficways constructed on unspecified alignment from Howard Street to Doyle Drive make no reduction in the quality or quantity of recreation and open space in this area and conform to the transportation element of the Comprehensive Plan.

### FORT MASON (Federal)

If the Fort property is declared surplus by the Federal government, acquire for public use. Devote northern half of site to natural park use. Retain and preserve historic structures for public purposes. Construct continuous waterfront walkway to connect the Marina area with Aquatic Park. If remaining southern half of site is not needed for recreation allow to be used for public education.

### ALCATRAZ ISLAND (Federal)

Maintain and improve Alcatraz for public open space and recreation use.

Protect historic values of the island and enhance visually significant vegetation and land forms. Provide safe and convenient public access to and throughout the island for recreation and viewing.

### PEDESTRIAN PROMENADE

Provide the public with a safe, direct and continuous pedestrian way linking all waterfront open spaces along the shoreline from the Bay Bridge to Aquatic Park. Design promenade to add genuine amenity to waterfront environment by means of landscaping, unifying materials and pedestrian features. Locate walkway to give the public maximum contact with water's edge and panoramic views of the Bay. Supplement this pedestrian system with a recreation-oriented shoreline transit system.

### AQUATIC and VICTORIAN PARK

Connect and expand these shoreline public recreation areas and emphasize their historic maritime character.

### HYDE STREET PIER

Continue and expand use as historic, public waterfront recreation area.

### COLUMBUS SQUARE

Locate a new landscaped public open space at the north end of Columbus Avenue connected to the waterfront with a pedestrian greenway along Leavenworth Street.

### FISH ALLEY PLAZA

Provide a maritime, leisure-oriented open space for pedestrians at the waterfront and Leavenworth Street.

### PIER 45

If pier is leased for development, provide a large public open space at the end of the pier. Assure well-defined public access along the length of the pier on both east and west sides.

### OVERLOOKS

Overlooks with convenient pedestrian access for viewing and fishing should be constructed, usually at grade, whenever possible along the entire waterfront area, including the shipping area between Piers 9 and 35.

### FISHERMAN'S WHARF PLAZA

Develop a new pedestrian plaza in the Fisherman's Wharf retail area which will provide access to Pier 45. Include cable car turntable and appropriate pedestrian-oriented commercial development.

### NORTH POINT PARK

Provide a major new shoreline park with continuous open water vistas and maximum access to the water. Incorporate generous planting, sitting and fishing areas.



PIERS 9-35

Consolidate maritime shipping activities in the Northern Waterfront between Piers 9 and 35. If and when all or a portion of the area between these piers and the Embarcadero is released from maritime use, emphasis should be given to development of major open spaces.

FERRY BUILDING PLAZA and  
M. JUSTIN HERMAN PLAZA

Improve the visual and physical connection between the city and the Bay. Reinforce recreational use of the Ferry Building area as terminus of Market Street and terminal for commuter and recreational ferry boats. Develop a major plaza on the BART platform for pedestrians and some commercial-recreation activities.

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

EASTERN SHORELINE

Specific policies for each site are intended to supplement the more general objective and policies for the shoreline.

The eastern shoreline contains several areas where new parks should be established. Within each recreation area, open space should be the major use. Thus, in each case, the plan indicates open space for the entire area. Some limited commercial-recreation uses may be integrated with the recreation areas subject to the following conditions:

- The proposed use should be directly related to waterfront recreation activity and compatible with the primary function of the recreation area.
- Development should be designed to preserve and create open views to the water and provide usable open space accessible to the general public free of charge.
- Development should be in a concentrated area and strictly limited in coverage to result in a small-scale, pedestrian-oriented facility that adds genuine interest, variety and amenity to recreational use of the shoreline.
- Land must be retained in public ownership.

Recreation-oriented commercial services should be permitted where appropriate on land adjacent to recreation areas on the eastern shoreline.

-  SHORELINE ZONE  
All new development subject to shoreline guidelines
-  PUBLIC OPEN SPACE  
Improve the quality of existing shoreline recreation
-  PROPOSED PUBLIC OPEN SPACE  
Provide new public parks and recreation facilities along the shoreline



EASTERN SHORELINE PLAN



## OVERLOOKS at PIERS 36-38, 40-42

Provide safe and comfortable elevated viewing areas on land between piers for observing Port activities. Include seating and display areas explaining Port activities and history.

## CHINA BASIN CHANNEL

Provide approximately nine acres of new recreation areas for the public along the channel shoreline. The recreation areas should be clearly marked and conveniently accessible to the public. Channel waterfront development should increase the opportunities for public access to the water's edge with a maximum interface of land and water. Shoreline designated for open space should be stabilized with bank reconstruction, running piers or quays.

In the future the area south of the channel may be converted to a large, multiple-use development. Should this happen, the channel should play a major role in the new development and a new plan for the channel as a recreation asset should be undertaken. In the interim the channel area's special amenities should be preserved and priority given to incremental development that will be compatible with long-range objectives for the shoreline.

## MISSION ROCK

Permit maximum recreational use of existing public boat ramp in conjunction with Port activity. If future Port development necessitates, replace recreation site with equivalent elsewhere on eastern shoreline.

## CENTRAL BASIN

Develop a major, twelve-acre public waterfront park on the Bay shoreline generally between Sixteenth and Eighteenth Streets. Some fill, such as beach sand, should be allowed if necessary for public recreation.

Priority should go to development of large waterside areas for beach, park and picnic facilities with continuous, safe public access. A public marina for small boats, fishing facilities and a landing for a recreational ferry should be provided as needed in the future.

## WARM WATER COVE

Improve and develop cove shoreline generally between Louisiana Street extended and the water for an eight-acre public park with fishing as the primary recreation use.

Limit fill to a minimum amount needed to achieve recreation objectives.

All maritime and recreation fill or pier construction at or adjacent to the cove should preserve the natural and man-made ecological factors that make the cove desirable for fishing. These factors include maximum open water and circulation into and out of the cove to prevent stagnation, a warm water flow that is compatible with water quality standards and a placid and quiet atmosphere with views of the Bay.

Public access to the cove should be via Twenty-fourth Street which should be improved and landscaped as part of the public park development.

## ISLAIS CREEK

Stabilize shoreline and develop small parks with well-defined public access to banks at bridge. In the event that the turning basin area is not needed for LASH activities and that adequate safety for pleasure boating can be assured, develop for recreational use with small boat harbor and enlarged shoreline park.

## INDIA BASIN

Develop Basin into a major forty-six acre public waterfront park with small boat harbor and marine-oriented recreation facilities. Preserve as large a body of open water as possible. Retain boat-yard uses and permit appropriate water-oriented commercial uses. Insure visual and physical public access from India Basin Recreation Area to landscaped shoreline of the LASH terminal.

## CANDLESTICK POINT

Create a major new eighty-five acre shoreline park built around a man-made cove with beach and marina facilities. Allow fill for recreation development and preserve the remaining platted area as permanent open water. Design park areas to separate active from passive recreation activities. Permit some commercial recreation that is compatible with marine-oriented recreation.

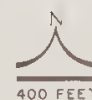
## CANDLESTICK - BAYVIEW HILL

Develop entire shoreline from Candlestick Point south to county line into marine-oriented linear park. Improve and expand Bayview Park and make it more accessible to the public for recreational purposes.





## PRESIDIO OF SAN FRANCISCO PLAN



Source: data provided by the Presidio of San Francisco 1972

### POLICY 4

Preserve the open space and natural character of the Presidio.

To many San Franciscans the Presidio represents the most important and historic open space in the city. For this reason, it should be retained in public ownership and its open space and natural character preserved.

In order to preserve open space and enhance the unique historic, scenic and recreational qualities of the Presidio, the following guidelines should be used as a basis for City review of development and land use changes in the Presidio:

1. New construction in the Presidio should occur within the existing devel-

oped area. No new construction should occur in the area designated for open space.

2. Development and improvements in the Presidio should conform to the City's Comprehensive Plan.

3. No additional housing units should be constructed in the Presidio.



# III · CITYWIDE SYSTEM · OBJECTIVE AND POLICIES

## ■ OBJECTIVE

Develop a diversified and balanced system of citywide recreation and open space.

Citywide recreational facilities in San Francisco offer a variety of opportunities to city residents and visitors alike. Unlike neighborhood facilities which aim at a basic level of service in every community, citywide facilities tend to be specialized; each is oriented to a single site, program, or activity. Because of this specialized nature of citywide recreational facilities, diversity and balance are important objectives in the citywide system.

All parts of the citywide system should supplement each other by providing a wide choice in recreational activities. New facilities should not duplicate services offered in other citywide parks unless demand for some facilities warrants duplication to prevent overcrowding. As new programs and facilities are proposed, their locations should be selected to correct any imbalance resulting from popular attractions located in a few parks. Landscaping and capital improvements projects, over and above those required to maintain the existing system, should be aimed at improvements which will make certain parks or programs more attractive so that overload may be eased.

A balance should also be maintained between citywide and neighborhood facilities. Although expansion of the citywide system is called for in this plan, particularly on the shoreline, expansion of the citywide system should not be achieved at the expense of neighborhood facilities and programs. Resources should be allocated in such a way that citywide and neighborhood facilities are maintained at an equally high level.

Achieving a balanced and diversified citywide recreation system also depends on citizen participation. Just as neighborhood groups help determine what programs and activities are to be offered in neighborhood facilities, so should citizens play a major role in determining additions, improvements, and changes in the citywide system.

## ● POLICY 1

Preserve public open space.

San Francisco's public open space system is fairly extensive. It ranges from large parks to undeveloped street rights-of-way. Much of the system is under the jurisdiction of the Recreation and Park Department. In addition to this land, a significant portion of the public open space in San Francisco is only informally part of the City's park and recreation system. This open space is held by a number of public agencies and is also either used for recreation or appreciated for its natural qualities, but is neither a park nor a playground. Open spaces in this second category include certain reservoirs, grounds of public institutions, forts, land for slope and view protection, roadway landscaping, alleys, dedicated public walkways and undeveloped street rights-of-way. Open spaces such as these are a very important part of the City's open space system. They supplement playgrounds and parks and are a major visual asset.

Development sometimes threatens public open spaces regardless of whether or not it is a formal part of the City's system. Almost all public open space at one time or another has been viewed as a source of vacant land for new construction. The shortage of vacant sites and the intensity of development in San

Francisco produce pressures on the City's public open space. These same factors generate considerable demand for open space and leave few opportunities to expand the open space system. Consequently, it is essential that the City preserve the public open space which remains.

Despite general agreement on the need to preserve public open space, over the years developments may indeed be proposed on public land designated as open space in this plan. It is anticipated that the most persuasive arguments in favor of development will be based on the "public value" of the proposed development. The public value will differ among proposals, and a determination of this value as compared with the value of open space will be difficult. In order to assist in this determination, four types of potential development proposals have been identified. If proposals for these types of development occur, the following policies should be applied:

### *Nonrecreational Uses*

Proposals for nonrecreational uses in public parks and playgrounds may arise in the future. Some may be for public facilities such as parking garages, streets and buildings, and for private or semi-public facilities. Development of this kind in parks and playgrounds should, without exception, be prohibited.

### *Recreation and Cultural Buildings*

Many San Francisco neighborhoods need more gymnasiums, swimming pools and other indoor facilities. Citywide recreation and cultural facilities also require new buildings and room to



expand. The scarcity of sites, the high cost of land together with the recreational nature of such facilities make parks and playgrounds frequent candidates as sites for recreation and cultural buildings.

This situation is often in conflict with the need to retain outdoor open space. The value of parks and playgrounds in a highly developed city like San Francisco is immeasurable. San Francisco's neighborhoods are densely populated, and many residents have no access to open space other than that provided by the City. Even in those areas with private yards, City parks make neighborhoods more livable. San Francisco's parks and playgrounds are a great asset to the city. Building in them results in a loss of open space which can rarely be replaced.

The City's policy should be made clear: where new recreation and cultural buildings are needed they should be located outside of or adjoining parks and playgrounds. Open space in parks and playgrounds should not be diminished except in a few unique cases. Examples of such cases include the Zoo, which requires special indoor facilities, John McLaren Park and Crocker-Amazon Playground which are underdeveloped and may be good sites for new recreation facilities designed to relieve pressure on overused parks.

This policy is not intended to disregard the importance of indoor recreation facilities. It is recognized that a properly balanced recreation and open space system combines both indoor and outdoor programs and open space. San Franciscans, however, should not be put in the position of developing indoor facilities at the expense of valuable open space. When new indoor facilities are required, the City should be prepared to allocate funds for land

acquisition as well as for construction. The Recreation and Park Department should not have to reduce the amount of open space in parks and playgrounds in order to avoid buying land for indoor recreation facilities. The same holds true for cultural facilities.

Proposals for additions onto existing recreation and cultural buildings in parks and playgrounds should be evaluated by the same process as that outlined below for supporting facilities.

#### *Supporting Facilities*

Many of the sites designated for recreation and open space in this plan are under the jurisdiction of public agencies other than the Recreation and Park Department and are intended primarily for public uses other than recreation. In these cases open space and recreation are intended by this plan to be secondary to the prime use. Examples are underdeveloped street rights-of-way, property on or adjacent to reservoirs and grounds of public institutions.

In these cases it is anticipated that requests for supporting facilities of various types may arise. These proposed facilities may be necessary to perform the public function of the particular agency holding the land designated as open space. In order to provide a basis for a decision in these cases, the agency proposing the supporting facility should make public the following material:

- information demonstrating that the facility proposed is necessary to provide the public service of the agency holding the site in question;

- sufficient proof that alternative sites have been studied and that the proposed facility can be located only on the site in question;

- a study which assesses the effects of the proposed facility on the site in question and on the surrounding neighborhood.

The City should base its decision on this information and the policies of the Comprehensive Plan. If the City approves the facility, it may request the agency to meet certain design criteria and performance standards.

#### *Surplus Public Land*

Occasionally public agencies find some land surplus to their needs. When public land becomes surplus to one public use, the Comprehensive Plan states that it should be reexamined to determine what other uses would best serve public needs. The Comprehensive Plan gives priority to direct public uses that meet either immediate or long-term public needs. One of these uses is recreation and open space.

In cases where public land that is declared surplus is designated as open space in this plan, the policy is clear: open space should take priority over other public uses; and, where necessary, jurisdiction over the surplus land should be transferred to the Recreation and Park Department. In cases where surplus land is not designated in this plan for open space, the site should be evaluated for its usefulness for a number of public uses, including open space and recreation.



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**PUBLIC RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE**

Retain outdoor open space, preserve natural qualities, and where appropriate convert to public recreational use



**PROPOSED RECREATION AND PUBLIC OPEN SPACE**

Acquire for or convert to public recreational use

Note: Because of the scale of this map it is not possible to show precise boundaries or exceptionally small open spaces. This information can be obtained at the Department of City Planning

# CITYWIDE RECREATION & OPEN SPACE PLAN





## ■ POLICY 2

Acquire additional citywide open space for public use.

Throughout San Francisco there are vacant parcels of land which have long been viewed as open space, but for which there is no guarantee of preservation. Most are situated on hilltops or on land with unique natural character; and because of prominent siting or landscaping, these parcels meet many of the objectives of the urban design element of the Comprehensive Plan. They serve as points of orientation, help identify districts within San Francisco, and contribute to neighborhood character. Many can also be used for recreation. Although most of these sites are small and not located in neighborhoods with the greatest need for open space, they are irreplaceable and should be acquired by the City.

It is recognized that the City has limited ability to purchase and maintain additional open space. If the publicly owned land identified in this plan is preserved as open space, San Francisco's citywide system will be relatively extensive; therefore, this policy calls for only a limited amount of open space to be acquired for the citywide system. The actual acreage involved appears slight, but the value of preserving these carefully selected open spaces is considerable.

Although acquisition is recommended for only a few sites, if land of open space value is offered to the City as a donation, the City should accept. Even if funds are not immediately available for maintenance or park development, the City should not refuse donations of open space with visual or recreational value. The City should accept the land and hold it in an unimproved state until funds are available for park development, if such development is actually necessary. Many spaces do not require extensive improvements to be used as open space.

## ■ POLICY 3

Gradually eliminate nonrecreational uses in parks and playgrounds and reduce automobile traffic in and around public open spaces.

In the past parks and playgrounds have been used as sites for public facilities such as libraries, fire and police stations, sewer plants and schools. Undoubtedly, the public need for these was great at the time of their construction and many are still essential. But as nonrecreational facilities such as these become obsolete, the City is faced with the decision to renovate them or to relocate them altogether.

In cases where it is possible to provide services elsewhere, it should be

the City's policy to eliminate nonrecreational uses in parks and playgrounds, demolish the facility and return the site to open space and recreation. If the facility can be successfully converted to recreational use, then reuse could be an alternative to demolition. The City should not, however, permit the reuse of such facilities for other nonrecreational purposes. The same policy should apply to the reuse of obsolete recreational facilities.

In cases where it is not presently possible to provide services elsewhere, the City should simply maintain the facility with minimum capital improvements and should not permit the expansion of nonrecreational facilities in parks and playgrounds.

### *Traffic*

Roads in and around San Francisco's parks are used both by through traffic and by people enjoying the parks. As demand for each intensifies, the conflict between the two uses grows. This conflict should be resolved in favor of park users because heavy or fast traffic endangers pedestrians, cuts access to open space, damages plant life and reduces the pleasure of being in parks. The following methods of reducing traffic in and around public open space are consistent with the urban design and transportation elements of the Comprehensive Plan and should be applied where possible:

- Discourage nonrecreational travel in and around public open space by diverting through traffic from park roads onto major and secondary thoroughfares located at sufficient distance from major open space.

- Reduce the capacity of park roads and redesign existing park roads for leisurely, scenic driving.

- Close off park roads on a part-time basis in order to return parks to park users; and expand into full-time closings where possible.

- Prohibit new roads in public open spaces.

- Encourage the use of public transit for recreational travel.

## ■ POLICY 4

Require usable outdoor open space in new residential development. Encourage creation of recreational space in existing development.

As development intensifies, greater demands are placed on citywide open space. The public system cannot be expected to keep pace with growth and acquire all the additional open space needed. Private development should also be responsible for providing open space.

Policies in the urban design element of the Comprehensive Plan call for the provision of public open space in major new development; zoning requirements carry out these policies. For example, downtown zoning bonuses encourage creation of plazas in commercial developments and low- and medium-density residential zoning requires usable open space. But no such requirement has yet been applied to higher density residential districts. It is in these districts where the greatest intensification can occur and where there is a tendency to overcrowd existing public open space.

In order to improve living conditions in each residential building and the quality of environment in San Francisco as a whole, the City should require that all new residential development provide usable outdoor open space. This space need not be accessible to the general public; rather it should be designed primarily to serve the residents of the development in which it is located. The amount of open space provided should increase with the size and density of the development.

New recreational space can also be created in existing development. Indoor space, rooftops, adjacent properties, portions of parking areas can often be converted to usable recreation areas. This kind of conversion furnishes useful space to a variety of users and should be encouraged by the City whenever possible, just as it is in new developments.



# IV • NEIGHBORHOODS • OBJECTIVE AND POLICIES

## ■ OBJECTIVE

Provide opportunities for recreation and the enjoyment of open space in every San Francisco neighborhood.

Every neighborhood should be served by adequate public open space and recreation facilities. Neighborhood parks and recreation facilities are essential; many people are unable to use citywide facilities if they are not located nearby. This is especially important for the very young and for the elderly who are principal users of parks and whose mobility is limited.

Achieving this objective will be difficult. High land costs and a shortage of vacant sites restrict opportunities to provide new open space and recreation facilities in San Francisco. For this reason, it is important that the City maximize use of existing facilities. Making the best use of parks and recreation areas can help offset the limited opportunities to build new facilities and can bring the most immediate improvement in recreation services to San Francisco neighborhoods.

By itself, better use of recreation facilities will not meet the recreational needs of San Francisco's neighborhoods. New space for parks and recreation facilities is also necessary. This requires establishing a long-term program to ensure that funds are provided on a systematic basis to acquire additional open space and expand the recreation program.

This objective also calls for maintaining an equitable balance in funding and personnel so that neighborhood recreation facilities are maintained and staffed at the same level of quality as citywide recreation facilities. Until substantial new sources of funds are available for maintaining a balance

between citywide and neighborhood expenditures, high-need neighborhoods should be given priority.

## ■ POLICY 1

Make better use of existing facilities.

All public open space and recreation facilities should be adequately maintained and staffed so that they can meet standards which ensure maximum use. Such standards should specify optimal levels of staff, safety, maintenance, access, coordination and information. Other relevant factors and the exact levels of adequacy for each standard should be determined by the Recreation and Park Department.

### *Staff*

All recreation facilities should be adequately staffed to carry out needed recreation programs and services. Proper supervision and leadership are one of the best means of ensuring maximum use of facilities. In all neighborhoods, diversified recreation programs should be offered, hours of operation should be sufficient to meet the neighborhood needs, and facilities and equipment should be well maintained and supervised. This cannot be accomplished unless adequate staffing is provided.

Supervisors and instructors should be trained and qualified in recreation and should be responsive to the particular neighborhood in which they are assigned. Qualification standards for staffing should include an appraisal of the person's ability to relate to and involve neighborhood residents.

### *Safety*

Recreation facilities should be designed and protected to ensure safety. Lack of safety seriously inhibits full use of existing facilities. Large parks, and even some small cloistered spaces, present special problems of personal safety. Methods of ensuring safety in the parks without destroying the features which make them pleasant environments should continue to be developed by the Recreation and Park Department.

Vandalism of park property is a serious problem which obviously decreases the extent to which existing facilities can be used. Several factors contribute to this problem including a shortage of equipment and inadequate supervision. The Recreation and Park Department should be provided with the resources it needs to improve safety and eliminate vandalism in problem areas.

### *Maintenance and Capital Improvements*

Neighborhood facilities require regular maintenance and capital improvements in order to carry out effective recreation programs. The City's operating budget and Capital Improvement Program must provide the necessary resources to ensure a high level of maintenance, if neighborhood needs are to be met in part by intensified use of existing facilities. Frequency of maintenance and the extent of capital improvements should relate directly to intensity of use.

### *Coordination*

Another standard which should be applied to measure the extent to which existing facilities are being fully utilized is coordination. In addition to the Recreation and Park Department,



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 **PUBLIC RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE**  
Make better use of existing neighborhood facilities

 **HIGH NEED NEIGHBORHOOD**  
Give priority for new parks and recreation improvements

 **RESIDENTIAL STREET AREA**  
Make improvements in street space for recreation and landscaping where possible

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# NEIGHBORHOOD RECREATION & OPEN SPACE PLAN





a number of other public and semi-public agencies operate recreation facilities and programs. Greater recreational opportunities and maximum use of facilities should be achieved through coordination and cooperation among these agencies and community groups. School yards, auditoriums and other educational facilities, for example, should be intensively used after school hours to meet the needs of neighborhoods. Community groups should continue to be encouraged to use public recreation space for special neighborhood events and programs. As well as providing space for recreation activities sponsored by community groups, the Recreation and Park Department should also coordinate its programs with the recreation programs offered by other public and semi-public organizations (for example, the Police Department, the YMCA, the Water Department).

#### *Access*

Easy, safe and convenient access should be provided to all recreation facilities. In some cases, nearby parks are not accessible to potential users, particularly to the elderly and small children because access to them would be dangerous or inconvenient. Distance itself is an obstacle to the use of recreation facilities. In San Francisco topography imposes special problems. Specific standards should be developed to improve access through better design, special public transportation and other means.

#### *Information*

The amount of public knowledge about recreation programs is another standard by which the full use of facilities can be gauged. To increase the use of existing recreation facilities, information on recreation programs should be widely distributed to neighborhood residents. Some regular effective system of distributing information is needed in many neighborhoods. In those neighborhoods where there is a language barrier special attention should be given to translating information into the language of the community.

### ▣ POLICY 2

Acquire new park and recreation space to serve San Francisco's residential neighborhoods.

There is a need for new park and recreation facilities in many neighborhoods throughout the city. Even if existing parks and recreation facilities are used more intensively as recommended, the need for new space for neighborhood recreation will remain. To meet this need, San Francisco should develop a long-range program to acquire new parks and recreation space to serve neighborhood residents.

Because the opportunities to acquire additional open space and recreation facilities at the neighborhood level are limited by a lack of available land and a scarcity of funds, the Recreation and Park Department should selectively use its power of eminent domain to meet neighborhood needs. This may be especially necessary in the older, more densely populated areas of the city where vacant land is scarce but where existing developments may be deteriorated or obsolete. Such acquisition, however, should minimize the displacement of residents and concentrate primarily on underutilized, nonresidential properties.

In addition to land acquisition, innovative techniques should be used to provide more space for recreation and to provide special programs. Mobile play equipment, portable swimming pools, and special traveling shows are among the techniques which should continue to be employed. Temporary playgrounds should be constructed on vacant lots being held for future development and, if necessary, even rooftops could be used to meet space needs in crowded neighborhoods. Where major public improvement programs are pending, new parks and recreation facilities should be provided to serve both new development and the adjacent neighborhood.

Street rights-of-way provide a special opportunity to increase space for recreation and to carry out increased programming. The transportation and urban design elements of the Comprehensive Plan contain several recommendations relating to the use of street rights-of-way to provide recreation and open space. Areas where street space landscaping and recreation improvements would be appropriate are designated in this plan.

In all cases when new parks, recreation facilities and capital improvements are being considered, their precise location should be determined by such factors as proximity to population concentrations, topography, ease of access, and visibility.

### ▣ POLICY 3

Give priority for recreation improvements to high-need neighborhoods.

In the improvement of neighborhood recreation throughout the city, priority should be given to those areas with the highest needs and the greatest deficiencies in facilities and programs. These are generally the more densely populated, older areas of the city where low-income, minority group populations are concentrated, where there are large numbers of young and elderly people, and where people have less mobility and financial resources to seek recreation outside of their neighborhood. Areas

with these characteristics are Chinatown, parts of the Western Addition, the Mission, South of Market, South Bayshore, and parts of the Central City area. These areas should be given priority for new recreation facilities and programs. In the future, the specific need neighborhoods may change. At such time, the priorities should be shifted accordingly to continue to meet the needs of areas with the biggest deficiencies.

It is possible to give such a priority to high-need neighborhoods without detracting from other needs if the Recreation and Park Department is provided with the necessary resources called for in other parts of this plan. However, without additional funds, this policy implies shifting some funds presently spent on citywide facilities and programs to high-need neighborhoods. This latter alternative is clearly less desirable than the former, but may be necessary to meet neighborhood recreational needs.



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